

Sex, Gender, and the Theology of Communion
Denver Mile High Congress
March 30, 1995

I. Introduction

A. Great joy to meet with catechists whose work participates in the mystery of "St. John the Baptist [who] is the Lord's immediate precursor or forerunner, sent to prepare his way." (#523)

1. Prepare the way by witnessing to the truth of the Word made flesh
2. Prepare the way by studying and understanding the truths of the Catholic Faith as explained in the Catechism
3. Prepare the way by providing opportunity for others to come to conversion through dialogue of catechesis

B. My own background is the combination of an education in Philosophy and Religious Consecration as a Sister of Mercy

1. Studied and taught philosophy for many years in a secular university with a particular interest in the person, respective identities of men and women, and community
2. Vocation as 'spouse of Christ' dedicated through the practice of the evangelical councils to bear witness to the Eternal Word through the action of the One Spirit which joins us all
3. Practically speaking, at this conference to offer some logical distinctions and structures of language and argument that may help to clarify what the *Catechism* actually says about gender identity.
 - a. Today will focus on language
 - b. Tomorrow will focus on complementarity
 - c. The works sheets provided offer outline and selected paragraphs relevant to the themes discussed on both days for participants to take home with them.

4. Introduce three philosophical concepts in today's lecture that will be used throughout as an aid to understand the *Catechism*

a. The 'concept of person' as a soul/body (spiritual and material) composit

i. The soul offers us the possibility of immortal participate life in God through grace which enters the essence of our soul

ii. The soul has faculties of intellect (understand the truth) and will (chose the good)- their operation is our responsibility

iii. Having a body makes us as persons capable of acts integrating the data of the senses (or powers) and the passions through exercise of intellect and will

iv. These acts can be virtuous or vicious depending upon our relation to truth and to the good

v. Our genus is animal, and our specific difference is rationality. By our acts we can become more like God or more like animals.

b. The concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' as differentiating men and women by many levels:

i. sex often used to refer to biological differentiation, with special relevance to the capacities for generation (male and female)

ii. gender often used to refer to psycho-social differentiation of men and women with special reference to one's identity as a woman or man, with masculine and/or feminine characteristics

iii. danger in separating these two concepts, in a kind of dualism when the person is a unity a human being, as a man or a woman.

c. The 'theory of analogy' as a comparison between two things in which there is a similarity and difference.

i. horizontal analogy: a comparison between two similar kinds of beings (e.g. a woman is to a daughter like a man is to a son)- here the analogy is discovered by observation of the senses and by reason

ii. spiritual (or transcendental) analogy: a comparison between two different kinds of beings (e.g. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a pearl, or like yeast, or like seeds planted on rock, in good soil, etc.)- here the analogy is discovered by faith working with observation of the senses and by reason. As Jesus tells us, not everyone understands the analogies in parables, but only those to whom it is revealed (Mat. 13)

iii. in this discussion of sex, gender, and the theology of communion the ability to engage in proper analogical thinking is crucial

C. My goal is to offer catechetical aids for helping catechists provide opportunity for others to come to conversion to the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

1. Conversion of Intellect to the truth of the Faith:

"Endowed with a spiritual soul, with intellect and with free will, the human person is from his very conception ordered to God and destined for eternal beatitude. He pursues his perfection in "seeking and loving what is true and good." (GS 15 #2) (#1711)

a. to love what is true we must know what is true

b. the catechist then must learn what is true in order to be able to help others in conversion of mind, or reason, or intellect and in the education of conscience as a judgment of reason

2. Conversion of Will to the goodness of the Faith:

a. it is not enough to simply know what is true, but we must also choose to believe what is true, and choose to appropriate what is good in our thoughts and actions

b. "The Catechism emphasizes the exposition of doctrine. It seeks to help deepen understanding of the deposit of faith. In this way it is oriented toward the maturing of that faith, its putting down roots in personal life and its shining forth in personal conduct." (#23)

3. Conversion of the Heart, or religious conversion of the whole person, who is taken over by the love of God.

a. The catechism emphasizes over and again the need for conversion of the heart: "From the Sermon on the Mount onwards, Jesus insists on conversion of heart..." (#2608)

b. In the conversion of heart the whole person is turned again towards God, the passions, senses, intellect, and will are integrated.

c. The catechism emphasizes also the important role of the sacraments, especially of the Eucharist and Reconciliation in conversion of heart

d. It also emphasizes the great blessings that occur to the Christian community as an effect of this total conversion

4. Turn now to the topic of sex and gender, and see how the *Catechism* offers numerous opportunities for conversion of intellect, will, and heart to those who listen to its Word, seek to understand its Word, receive its Word in the depths of the soul, and put its Word into action in everyday life.

a. The presentation will follow the three phases of our relation to the Word in the Creation, Fall, and Redemption

b. It will end with a short reflection on the English language and the spirit of the Beatitudes

II. God and Creation: "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him." (John 1: 1-3) (#241)

A. There is no gender in God in the beginning. The Catechism is clear on this point. "In no way is God in man's image. He is neither man nor woman. God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes." (#370)

1. Let us assume that someone here decides to describe me to a friend, after the lecture, and says: "That short man, he spoke..." This would be a subjective impression of my identity as a short man, but it would not be the objective reality.

2. In a similar way, if a person says: " God, that mighty woman she," it would be a subjective impression, but we must look at the essence of the object that God is.

B. God is Father not as a gender reality, but in essence as first principle or first origin: "By calling God "Father," the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children." (#239)

1. The catechism makes a distinction between Theology of God which considers mystery of who God is ("I am who am"- no gender) and Economy which reflects on the works or effects of God in the world

2. The catechism calls us to conversion of heart with respect to this distinction: "The purification of our hearts has to do with paternal or maternal images, stemming from our personal and cultural history, and influencing our relationship with God. God our Father transcends the categories of the created world. To impose our own ideas in this area "upon him" would be to fabricate idols to adore or pull down. To pray to the Father is to enter into his mystery as he is and as the Son has revealed him to us." (#2779)

Sum

a. The essence of God = the mystery of God, the Father, first divine Person of the Most Holy Trinity (#198) - gender free

b. The operations of God = understanding of God acting like a father or mother in the world (#236)- analogical use of gender- similarity plus difference - God acts in the world sometimes like a human father and acts in the world sometimes like a human mother.

i. (#219: "God's love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother's for her children.")

3. **Summary:** God is Father. God's essence is to be Father. Father is His Name as revealed by Jesus Christ. He is Father as Pure Spirit, and first origin of Jesus Christ. There is no gender in God the Father. (#2779)

C. Jesus Christ is Son: He revealed to us that he is One with the Father , He said: "Before Abraham was, I AM; and even "I and the Father are one." (Jn. 8:58, 10:30) (#590) -no gender in Jesus Christ when considered in His Divine identity.

1. Jesus uses the word "Father" differently than we do.

2. Jesus also revealed that he is different from God the Father in one crucial respect. As the Catechism expresses it: "Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard of sense; he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father by his relationship to his only Son who, reciprocally, is Son only in relation to his Father.." (#240)

3. Jesus Christ as only Son of the Father transcends gender; but Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word is engendered as a male human being. This great mystery of the identity of Jesus Christ as Fully God and Fully Man contains the hinge of catechesis

4. "Catechesis aims at putting 'people...in communion... with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity." (#426)

5. The *Catechism* explicitly states the importance of this identity of Jesus as Son of God: "The title "Son of God" signifies the unique and eternal relationship of Jesus Christ to God his Father: he is the only Son of the Father; he is God himself. To be a Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (#455) *

6. **Summary:** Jesus Christ is Son, Son of God is His Name, as eternally begotten by the Father and revealed at His Baptism and the Transfiguration. No Gender in Jesus Christ's Divine Nature as Son---

Jesus Christ is also fully God (Pure Spirit) and fully man (union of spirit and matter), by His Incarnation and birth of the Virgin Mary. He becomes engendered in his Incarnation as a man, a male human being. So Jesus Christ is both Son of the Father (no gender) and son of the Father and Mary (engendered as male)

The Son reveals God the Father as His Father.

C. The Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, which is sent into our hearts to enable us to participate in the life of God

1. The Catechism describes the Spirit as follows: "The One whom the Father has sent into our hearts, the Spirit of the Son, is truly God. Consubstantial with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is inseparable from them, in both the inner life of the Trinity and his gift of love for the world...When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath...To be sure, it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him." (#689)

2. There is no gender in the Holy Spirit when considered in the Divine nature of the Trinity, but "in the divine economy" the spirit acts both like a father, like a mother, and like a spouse.

3. **Summary:** The Holy Spirit is Gift of the Father and the Son, and Love is His Name. The Holy Spirit is the One who reveals in our hearts the Son as The Son of God and The Father as The Father of the Son.

D. The Creation of the World

1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1) (#279)
God created an ordered material universe

2. God as Pure Spirit, and Creator exists -with no gender- separate from the visible and invisible world "The eternal God gave a beginning to all that exists outside of himself" (#290)

a. The catechism reflects on the "language of faith" about God as Father and Creator of the world. (#238-9)

b. It suggests that as transcendent creator of the world, God's creative action can be understood analogically as like the generative action of a human father. At the same time, it also suggests that God's immanent action can be understood analogically as like the generative action of a human mother. For example, "(#239 "God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between a Creator and creature.")

c. The *Catechism* insists, however, that this analogy be carefully limited: "We ought to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is father." (#239)

3. The *Catechism* states clearly that "Creation is the common work of the Holy Trinity." (#292)

a. God the Father created the world from nothing, "He created everything by the eternal Word, his beloved Son." (291),

b. or again: "[God, the Father] made all things by himself, that is, by his Word and by his Wisdom, by the Son and the Spirit" who, analogically speaking are compared with God's hands." (291)

E. The Creation of Man and Woman

1. "Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves." (Gen 1: 26) The original human being (Adam) was created in the image and likeness of God (with intellect and will)

a. The Holy Father tells us in his homilies on *Genesis* that this single human being Adam represents all human beings in an original state (in a certain sense, as having no gender, as neither male nor female) *or both*

b. "By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an "outstanding manifestation of the divine image," (#1705)

c. The *Catechism*, while not directly emphasizing this point, reflects that "Because of its common origin the human race forms a unity, for "from one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth." (#360)

2. Next we have the first explicit mention of gender in Genesis: "God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." (Gen 1: 27).

a. With the union of the spiritual and material worlds gender is revealed in creation. The *Catechism* explicitly connects the image of God with gender when it adds to the above quotation from Genesis: "Man occupies a unique place in creation: I) he is "in the image of God," II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; III) he is created "male and female"; and IV) God established him in his friendship." (#355).

b. In the second account of the creation of man and woman, from the side of the sleeping Adam, from the human-being Adam to the man and the woman, the *Catechism* makes a similar point: "God created man and woman together and willed each for the other. The Word of God gives us to understand this through various features of the sacred text." "It is not good that the man should be alone"...Then the woman, God "fashions" from the man's rib and brings to him elicits on the man's part a cry of wonder, an exclamation of love and communion: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Man discovers woman as another "I," sharing the same humanity." (#372)

sum// c. The original creation of man and woman, with intellect and will, capable understanding and loving their own shared human identity and the God whose image it reflects, and capable of understanding and loving their gender differentiated identities and the God whose image it also reflects, originally existed in a communion of love and knowledge by their participation in the life of the Trinity. This was a true communion of sex and gender in the Eternal Word "through whom all things were made."

III. The Fall of Man and Woman

A. Then came the moment of decision to reject God, or as the *Catechism* so aptly expresses it, the moment in which man preferred himself to God, and chose himself over and against God." (#398).

1. This decision to prefer the self to God was taken both by the woman Eve and by the man Adam, although for different reasons.

2. "By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a *personal sin*, but this sin affected *the human nature* that they would then transmit *in a fallen state*." (#404)

B. The effects of the Fall for men and women were momentous:

1. First effect of Fall: Distorted image of God: "Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness. They become afraid of the God of whom they have conceived a distorted image---that of a God jealous of his prerogatives." (#399)

a. If we return for a moment to the previously mentioned call to purification of hearts from "fabricated idols of God" we can recognize one "fabricated idol to adore false images of God" = univocal use of "father" as a gendered model of God -implying no difference between God, the Father who, as Spirit, transcends gender and God's action in the world, composed of spirit and matter, which may be understood analogically like a human father

b. another example of a distorted image of God is the "fabricated idol to tear down true images of God" = equivocal rejection of the use of "Father" for God- which falsely implies that there is no similarity between God, who is truly Father, and God's action in the world which is analogically like human fathers.

c. a similar rejection of analogical application of such nouns as 'Lord' 'King' and adverbs as 'He' and 'Him' to Jesus Christ or to God can be seen as examples of tearing down true images of God

d. we could say that an original holiness in the application of language to God was reflected in the analogical application of terms, and that original sin is more evident in the rejection of analogy and its replacement by univocal or equivocal use of terms.

e. so we need transcendental analogies to refer to the correct understanding of God as Spirit, who transcends gender differentiation found in human beings who are composites of spirit and matter. An analogy always has something alike and something different. What is alike is the analogy of origin in generation; what is different is the transcendence and spiritual identity of God as Father in comparison with human fathering and mothering. Distortions do not keep the proper balance of likeness and difference; they emphasize only likeness or they emphasize only difference.

2. Second Effect of Fall: Distorted integration of faculties within the self

- a. "The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice is now destroyed: the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered..." (#400)
- b. The intellect is darkened and the will weakened, so the image of God is still present in the individual human being, but it is not operative as effectively as before the Fall.
- c. As the effects of original sin is passed down through inheritance, we see this distorted integration of faculties appearing in a hardening of unbelief (#674), self glorification (#675), refusal of grace (#682), and in human beings being "deprived of the divine "likeness"" (#705, #708)
- d. Of course, it is here that the Catechist has such an important role, akin to John the Baptist: "Finally, with John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to man of "the divine likeness," prefiguring what he would achieve with and in Christ." (#720)
- e. That is, for conversion, the darkened intellect needs to be enlightened by being taught what is true, the weakened will needs to be strengthened by being shown what is good, and the hardened heart needs to be opened to the healing power of God by teaching about prayer and the Sacraments. All of these things need the proper use of language and the saving action of the Spirit of the Eternal Word.

3. Third Effect of Fall: Distortion of union of woman and man

- a. The *Catechism* states that another effect of original sin is: that "the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination." (#400) There is a rupture of the original union created by God among people.
- b. If we want to consider the relation of language to this effect of rupture in relationship caused by original sin, the story of the Tour of Babel is instructive. The great sin of the people living in the Tour of Babel was their "fallen humanity, united only in its perverse ambition to forge its own unity." (#57). They tried to forge a new unity through originating and speaking a single language of their own invention.

c. The story of the Tower of Babel in *Genesis* tells us that Yahweh's subsequent division of humanity into many different language groups was done in part to lead humanity to the full realization that only God can bring about a genuine communion among people. (Gen. 1:11-10) Only God can heal the rupture that human beings brought into creation through original sin.

d. Only God's revelation through the Son can reveal to us the way to union of human beings and God and communion of men and women.

halfway 30 min

IV. The Redemption of Men and Women

A. "The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1:14)

1. Union with God comes through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ Redeemer of the World, Fully God and Full Man (as human and as male human being)- Jesus is one like us in operation. He did ^{the} everything we do, and so he can join us, through his own union of being fully human and fully Divine with God the Father whose essence is Divine.

2. Jesus Christ, broke the power of sin by his Passion, Death, and Resurrection and he set the world free (#421)

3. "The Church is one because of her founder: for 'The Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, ...restoring the unity of all in one people and one body.'" (#813)

4. The *Catechism* also refers to the union brought about by the Church's source, the Trinity and by her soul, the Holy Spirit (#813), but in our focus on language we will concentrate on the particular action of the Eternal Word in bringing about union and communion.

5. The two important gender related words in the *Catechism* with respect to living as a Christian are 'son' in the theme of Redemption through Adoption as Sons through Christ the Son; and bride in the theme of Redemption through spousal union as bride with Christ, the Bridegroom

6. All men and women are called to be Sons of God the Father by adoption and all women and men are called to relate to Christ, the Bridegroom, as bride; but their analogical way of relationship differs by gender

7. Each of these two great mysteries will now be considered in more detail

B. Redemption by Adoption as Sons

1. God the Father invites us into Jesus' relation with Him as Son, through Adoption. The *Catechism* describes this process as follows: "The Word became flesh to make us *"partakers of the divine nature."* "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." (#460)

a. So all ^{persons} men are invited to become sons of God through union with the Eternal Word made flesh, who is The Son. This grace of participate life in the Trinity comes to change the essence of the self by adoption.

b. In fact, this invitation into adoption is given as the reason for the Incarnation.

c. The reality of adopted sonship is open to women as well as men. In fact, in the first paragraph of the *Catechism*, the phrase "children of adoption" is used to emphasize this point. "God sent his Son as Redeemer and Savior. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life." (#1)

i. If we adopted into a family, then we become heirs. There are two divine inheritances which are frequently mentioned in the *Catechism*; eternal life is one, and holiness is the other.

ii. Through "filial adoption"... "we become "co-heirs" with Christ and worthy of obtaining the promised inheritance of eternal life." (#2009)

iii. "He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ...In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfect charity which is holiness." (#1709)

2. We must accept, by our own acts this invitation of the Father to be adopted by Him through the Son. This acceptance done either by ourselves, or in our stead by our god parents, is sealed by the Sacrament of Baptism which is a rebirth by water and the spirit. (#2781)

a. There are over seventy different paragraphs in the *Catechism* which use the phrases "adopted as sons," "adopted sonship", "filial adoption", and "children of adoption." This reality of adoption must be accepted as central to the Catholic Faith.

b. eg. adopted as sons

(#52: "God who 'dwells in unapproachable light,' wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son."; #422 "God sent forth his Son...so that we might receive adoption as sons."; #441 "In the Old Testament, 'sons of God'...signifies and adoptive sonship that establishes a relationship of particular intimacy between God and his creature."; #537: "Through Baptism the Christian...[becomes] the Father's beloved son in the Son..."; #549: "...sin, ... thwarts [free men] in their vocation as God's sons..."; #782: "The status of [the people of God] is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God..."; #1213: "Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God..."; #1270: "Reborn as sons of God, [the baptized] must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church..."; #1279: "The fruit of Baptism... [is a] birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father..."; #1487: "The sinner wounds God's honour and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a son of God..."; #2021: "Grace is the help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming his adopted sons."; and #2798: "We can invoke God as 'Father' because the Son of God made man has revealed him to us. In this Son, through Baptism, we are incorporated and adopted as sons of God."

c. eg. adopted children

(#1: "...God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life."; #689: "...this joint mission will be manifested in the children adopted by the Father in the Body of his Son; the mission of the Spirit of adoption is to unite them to Christ and make them live in him..."; #1243: "The newly baptized is now, in the only Son, a child of God entitled to say the prayer of the children of God: 'Our Father.'"; #2212: "In our brothers and sisters we see the children of our parents...in the baptized, the children of our mother the Church; in every human person, a son or daughter of the One who cannot be called 'our Father'."; #2782: and "We can adore the Father because he has caused us to be reborn to his life by adopting us as his children in his only Son: by Baptism, he incorporates us into the Body of his Christ...")

d. eg. filial adoption

(#654: "The Paschal mystery...brings about filial adoption so that men become Christ's brethren, as Jesus himself called his disciples after his Resurrection: "Go and tell my brethren." We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because that adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his

Resurrection."; #1110: "In the liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all the blessings of creation and salvation with which he has blessed us in his Son, in order to give us the Spirit of filial adoption."; #1709: "He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ..."; #1727: "The Beatitudes teach us the final end to which God calls us: the Kingdom, the vision of God, participation in the divine nature, eternal life, filiation, rest in God."; #2009: "Filial adoption, in making us partakers by grace in the divine nature, can bestow *true merit* on us as a result of God's gratuitous justice. This is our right by grace, the full right of love, making us "co-heirs" with Christ and worthy of obtaining "the promised inheritance of eternal life."; #2026: "The grace of the Holy Spirit can confer true merit on us, by virtue of our adoptive filiation..."; #1303: "...Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "*Abba! Father!*"; and #1316: "Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation..."

e. So all Christians, men and women are first and foremost sons, by their incorporation into the Sonship of Jesus Christ. This is the clear deposit of the Christian faith.

3. As a consequence of this ^{filial} adoption as ~~sons~~, we are also invited to pray to the Father as our Father. In other words, Jesus invites us into His prayer to the Father, so when we say the words: "Our Father" we are praying them through Jesus.

a. "The newly baptized is now, in the only Son, a child of God entitled to say the prayer of the children of God: "Our Father." (#1243)

b. This is a very important distinction for questions of gender. When we pray the "Our Father" we are praying to The Father who transcends gender as pure spirit, because we are praying through Jesus. When he revealed this prayer to us, (#2768: "[The Lord] teaches us to make prayer in common for all our brethren. For he did not say "my father" who art in heaven, but "our Father" (#2768)

c. At the Resurrection, he told Mary Magdalene " I am ascending to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God" #660

d. #2603: "[Jesus'] exclamation, "Yes, Father!" [at the Beatitudes] expresses the depth of his heart, his adherence to the Father's "good pleasure," echoing his mother's *Fiat* at the time of his conception and prefiguring what he will say to the Father in his agony..."

e. The Catechism states explicitly that "There is no other way of Christian prayer than Christ. Whether our prayer is communal or personal, vocal or interior, it has access to the Father only if we pray "in the name of Jesus. The sacred humanity of Jesus is therefore the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father."#2664

4. In Baptism, the Church is our Mother

a. The connection between our filial spirit and Mother Church is explicitly made in the *Catechism*: (#2040: "Thus a true filial spirit towards the Church can develop among Christians. It is the normal flowering of the baptismal grace which has begotten us in the womb of the Church and made us members of the Body of Christ. In her motherly care, the Church grants us the mercy of God which prevails over all our sins and is especially at work in the sacrament of reconciliation. With a mother's foresight, she also lavishes on us day after day in her liturgy the nourishment of the Word and Eucharist of the Lord.")

b. At death, Mother Church hands over to God the Father, the adopted child, whose growth in the spirit she has fostered: (#1683: "The Church who, as Mother, has borne the Christian sacramentally in her womb during his earthly pilgrimage, accompanies him at his journey's end, in order to surrender him "into the Father's hands." She offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of his grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory.")

c. The Catechism expresses the call of all Christians to filial prayer #2599 and #2605, filial faith #2609, filial boldness in belief #2610, and filial conversion of heart entirely directed to the Father #2608.

5. If we return to the more direct question of gender and language, and consider the language of prayer to the Father, we can see that women and men have a slightly different relationship to the words "adopted sons" or even "filial adoption"- Ask the questions: Do I understand in my intellect the invitation of the Father to become His son? Do I choose with my will becoming a son of God as a good for me? Do I allow in my heart this divine filiation to take me over completely with love?

- Spiritual*
- a. How can a man, a male human being, be a son of God? By identifying as son of human parents with Jesus as a son of Mary and by a transcendental analogy with Jesus Christ as Son of the Father who offers him an adopted sonship in the spirit (if he does not do this, he rejects the analogical difference and falls into a univocal interpretation of being a son)
 - b. How can a woman, a female human being, be a son of God? She must make two analogies, as female she understands herself as a daughter or human parents in a horizontal analogy with Jesus as the son of Mary, and by a transcendental analogy to understand herself as an adopted son in the spirit (if she refuses to do this, then she rejects the analogical aspect of similarity and falls into an equivocal interpretation of 'being a son.')
 - c. the same pattern of thinking needs to be followed with the phrase 'filial adoption' because it has its prime meaning in Jesus Christ who is both Son of the Father and son of Mary.
 - d. Given the structure of the English language women need to exercise a greater flexibility in this two step process of horizontal and transcendental analogy than do men who need only make a transcendental analogy in thinking, willing, and loving to become sons by adoption.
 - e. The catechism in fact emphasizes that "The free gift of adoption requires on our part continual conversion and new life. (#2784) This conversion must be of intellect, will, and heart and a total response of "Yes Father" to the invitation to divine adoption. In this way men and women who are created in the image of God, participate more and more in the Divine likeness.

C. Redemption by marriage to the Bridegroom

1. If acceptance of the call into adopted filiation is the beginning of a new Christian life, then acceptance of the nuptial call into a spousal love is the completion of Christian life.

a. Christ is not only the Beloved Son of the Father, He is also the Bridegroom sent into the World to redeem it. The *Catechism* is explicit about this spousal identity of Jesus Christ.

b. eg. ("The theme of Christ as Bridegroom of the Church was prepared for by the prophets and announced by John the Baptist. The Lord referred to himself as the "bridegroom." (Mk. 2:19). The Apostle speaks of the whole Church and each of the faithful, members of his Body, as a bride

"betrothed" to Christ the Lord as to become but one spirit with him." (Mt.22:1-14; 25:1-13; 1 Cor 6:15-17) #796.)

i. crucial here is the phrase- each of the faithful is called to be a bride, in one spirit with Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom

ii. here again we can see a gender differentiated context for response for a man and for a woman to this invitation

iii. so just as a woman must make both a horizontal and a transcendental analogy to become a son of God, so a man must make both a horizontal and a transcendental analogy to become a bride. Conversion takes an extra step in the process...

iv. How can a woman be a bride in one spirit with Jesus Christ? By identifying as female with a bride in a human marriage married to a male human being, and then by engaging in a transcendental analogy with Jesus Christ as Spouse and bridegroom or each member of the Christian Church

v. How can a man be a bride in one spirit with Jesus Christ? By drawing a horizontal analogy with a female human bride and then engaging in a transcendental analogy with Jesus Christ as Spouse and bridegroom of each member of the Christian Church.

→ the
Church
as
bride

vi. The call of all men and women to become the bride of Christ, joined in one spirit, by a spiritual covenant is described as a covenant (#1612: "The nuptial covenant between God and his people Israel had prepared the way for the new and everlasting covenant in which the Son of God, by becoming incarnate and giving his life, has united to himself in a certain way all mankind saved by him, thus preparing for "the wedding-feast of the Lamb."

vi. So men have to be more flexible in their thinking, willing, and choosing, than do women in their acceptance of the invitation to be in spousal union with Jesus Christ, their Lord. Women need only a one step process of conversion, while men need a two step process of conversion.

c. The ancient covenant is achieved through the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, both at the end of time, and now: (#2730" When Jesus insists on vigilance, he always relates it to himself, to his coming on the last day and every day: today. The bridegroom

comes in the middle of the night; the light that must not be extinguished is that of faith: "Come, my heart says, 'seek his face!' ")

2. By the Sacrament of Baptism we become sons, and in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we are brides

a. (#1617: The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist.")

b. Many times this theme is repeated: (#1621: "In the Eucharist the memorial of the New Covenant is realized, the New Covenant in which Christ has united himself forever to the Church, his beloved bride for whom he gave himself up."; #1329 The Sacrament of the Eucharist is called "The Lord's Supper ... because it anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.")

c. Our adopted filiation has its fulfilment in Divine union in the one spirit-
or nuptial union

3. Christ is the Bridegroom / the Church is the Bride

other session
summary

a. Mary prefigures the Church as bride, and she intercedes for the Church (#2618: "At Cana, the mother of Jesus asks her son for the needs of a wedding feast; this is the sign of another feast---that of the wedding of the Lamb where he gives his body and blood at the request of the Church, his Bride...")

b. The Bishop acts as Bridegroom "in the person of Christ": (#1348: "At the head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting *in the person of Christ the head (in personal Christi capitis)* presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings and says the Eucharistic Prayer.")

c. Consecrated virgins in the Church , and those who have taken a vow of celibacy, act as signs of the Wedding Feast of Christ and the Church in heaven: (#923- "Virgins... are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God...[and become] constituted [as] a transcendent sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of this heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come.")

d. All faithful men and women are called to live this reality of the end times in the present: (# 1045: For man, this consummation will be the final realization of the unity of the human race, which God willed from creation and of which the

pilgrim Church has been "in the nature of sacrament." Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, the holy city of God, the Bride, the wife of the lamb. She will not be wounded any longer by sin, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community., The beatific vision, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion.") This is the pathway of sex and gender to the Theology of Communion!

e. Our response to this spousal call is the way to be redeemed from sin and the effects of sin...The question is: what kind of bride are we? (#773: "...holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom. Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as "the bride without spot or wrinkle...")

4. The language of the *Catechism* with respect to the Great Mystery of Bridegroom and Bride

a. Throughout the Catechism the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and each member of the Holy Trinity is always referred to as 'He'. This includes reference to God as Father and to the Holy Spirit (The Spirit who overshadowed Mary in the Incarnation, and who at the end of times with the Bride says: "Come" to the wedding Feast)

b. Throughout the Catechism, the Church is always referred to as 'she'. This includes both reference to the Church as Bride, and to the Church as Mother.

c. Men among the faithful then have a similar set of choices as women have with relation to the language of sex and gender, and the call into communion. All men and women are called to become adopted sons, through the Sonship of Christ, and betrothed brides, through the offer of nuptial love made by the Father through the Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom .

d. A man must decide whether he can analogously accept the call 'to be a bride' just as a woman has to decide whether she can analogously accept the call 'to be an adopted son' The Son and the Bridegroom wait our response....

V. Conclusion: Language and The Kingdom of Heaven

1. Sex, gender and the etymology of language:

A. Many languages have more words to make central distinctions between a human beings, a man and woman, than does English

i. Latin: homo- for a man or a woman; vir for a man and femina (or mulier) for a woman

ii. Hebrew: Adam- for a man or a woman; ish for a man and ishah for a woman

B. But French (the original language of the Catechism) and English do not have this wealth of words for making distinctions

i. French: homme- for a man or a woman; and homme for a man (male) and femme for a woman

ii. English: man- for a man or a woman; and man for a man (male) and woman for a female human being

D. Interesting to note that in Ancient Saxon English there were two different words for a man and a woman

i. Mann for a man or a woman; and -wer-mann for a male; and wif-mann (or wifman) for a female

ii. By the end of the Saxon period the male wer-mann dropped out, and only the compound wif-mann continued to become woman

iii. we could say, ^{in English} we lost our inheritance, we became, in a certain respect poor.

2. The Catechism places a great deal of emphasis on the central place of the practice of the Beatitudes in Christian life

i. if we think of the poverty of our inheritance of the sex and gender words in our English language, we could reflect on the Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven."

ii. When a person is poor, he or she has to be very flexible, and made do with a lot less than might be desired

iii. In this poverty a person can discover the poverty of Jesus Christ, who became poor for us.

* | iv. (#1717: "The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ...and They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes

characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.")

v. Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. In our poverty we are brought into contact with Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of the Father, the Eternal Word of God.

3. In conclusion, this reflection on sex, gender, the theology of communion has tried to show that in the *Catechism*, communion or unity comes through the Word, Jesus Christ and not through words created by men and women without God-analogous to the tower of Babel.

a. The catechist has a unique role in bringing others to conversion, of intellect, will, and heart to the beliefs of the Catholic Faith (I believe this is true, I choose this as good for me, I love this faith as my call)

b. which include the call to filial adoption through Jesus Christ, the Son

c. and the call to spousal union with the Holy Trinity, through Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom

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we all have to die
to be reborn in
filial adoption -
and die - to be
reborn in spousal
union -
only way of dying
is different
somewhat
for a man
and a
woman -